

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL

'Granma' editorial: 'Cubans will defend our sovereignty, revolution'
— PAGES 1,8-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 12 MARCH 28, 2016

Syria cease-fire aims to serve needs of US, Moscow rulers

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Washington's bloc with Moscow in Syria is aimed at drawing down the instability and combat there in hopes of better defending the interests of the propertied rulers of the U.S. in the region. The rulers of the two countries continue to push a truce in parts of the country as a new round of United Nations-organized talks opened on reaching a political deal there. Against this backdrop, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced March 14 he would "begin withdrawing the main part of our military group" from Syria.

The war began when Syrian President Bashar al-Assad savagely suppressed peaceful mass protests against his regime in 2011, part of the "Arab Spring" mobilizations that swept the Mideast and North Africa. Today the country is divided between areas controlled by the regime, territory in northern Syria controlled by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), other smaller areas run by opponents of Assad, and sections where brutal control is exercised by the reactionary Islamic State.

"The resurrection from oblivion of Russian-U.S. cooperation is one of the

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Breakup of Trump rally sets back working class

Socialist Workers Party campaign statement



Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy, left, talks with Jordan Strange about fight to win jobs and higher wages in line for Donald Trump rally March 11 in Chicago.

The following statement was released March 12 by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president.

On March 11, hundreds of people organized to disrupt and force the cancellation of a Chicago rally where thousands had come to hear Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. This was a blow to free speech

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Socialist candidate gets hearing at Trump event

BY DAN FEIN

CHICAGO — The organized disruption that forced the cancellation of Republican candidate Donald Trump's campaign rally here March 11 "was a blow to free speech," Socialist Workers Party candidate for president Alyson Kennedy said. "Shutting down political expression is inevitably turned against workers."

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'Cubans will defend our sovereignty, revolution'

On March 9 Granma, the newspaper of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, published a front page editorial on President Barack Obama's upcoming visit to Cuba. The translation, subheadings and footnotes below are by the Militant.

EDITORIAL FROM CUBAN DAILY 'GRANMA' ON OBAMA'S VISIT

The president of the United States of America, Barack Obama, will make an official visit to Cuba March 20-22.

This will be the second time a U.S. president comes to our archipelago. The only prior such visit was by Calvin Coolidge, who landed in Havana in January 1928. He arrived aboard a warship to attend the Sixth Pan American Conference, held under the auspices of a notorious figure in our history, [U.S.-backed dictator] Gerardo Machado. This will be the first time a president of the United States comes to a Cuba in full possession of its sovereignty and with a revolution in power, headed by its historic leadership.

This event is part of the process initiated Dec. 17, 2014, when the president of Cuba's Councils of State and

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New revelations point to bosses, gov't responsibility for Quebec rail disaster

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL — New revelations on the front page of the March 7 *Globe and Mail*, Canada's national English-language daily, point the finger of responsibility for the July 6, 2013, Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, rail disaster squarely at the bosses of the now defunct Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway and the complicity of federal government agency Transport Canada.

"Nearly three years after the Lac-Mégantic rail disaster, new information shows the tragic explosion ... could have been avoided by a simple 10-second safety procedure that Transport Canada did not require the cost-cutting railway to use," wrote *Globe* reporter Grant Robertson.

The rail bosses ordered their engineers — the one-person crew on their oil trains under special dispensation approved by the government agency — not to use the built-in automatic braking system, the *Globe* reported.



Globe report, above, that bosses ordered workers not to use backup brakes prior to July 2013 Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, oil train disaster helps expose frame-up charges against train engineer Thomas Harding, right.



Over the next few days Robertson's article was followed by a series detailing how Montreal, Maine and Atlantic bosses cut corners on safety to boost profits, while the government looked the other way.

The revelations in these articles strengthen the fight of locomotive engineer Thomas Harding and train controller Richard Labrie, members of United Steelworkers Local 1976, who face frame-up charges — 47 counts of criminal negligence caus-

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Jump in charges, firings of cops in killings result of street protests

BY SETH GALINSKY

Three times as many police officers were charged with murder or manslaughter for on-duty shootings in 2015 than the annual average since 2005. This fact, the result of the explosion of protests against cop killings and brutality across the country, is documented by Philip Stinson, a professor of criminal justice at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

According to Stinson, only 47 police officers nationwide — not counting FBI or immigration cops — were charged with murder and/or manslaughter from 2005 to 2014, about 4.7 a year. In 2015, he said, the number of indictments jumped to 18.

"In the past, the police's own narrative and versions" of shootings at their hands has "rarely been challenged in any successful way," Stinson told the *Militant* in a phone interview March 14. That's not news to working people, who know that the so-called justice system is stacked in favor of the

cops and prosecution.

In the first three months of this year four more cops have been indicted, Stinson said.

The reason for these changes, he

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Teamster airline mechanics picket United at aviation event

New Zealand meat workers protest union-busting layoff

Worldwide protests demand Moscow free Nadiya Savchenko

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Demonstrations took place in more than 100 cities around the world March 6-9 demanding freedom for Ukrainian pilot Lt. Nadiya Savchenko from Russian prison. Savchenko, 34, is being put through a show trial in Donetsk, Russia, on frame-up charges of “complicity” in the death of two Russian journalists in June 2014 because of her “political hatred” for Moscow, and of sneaking into Russia. If convicted she faces 23 years in jail. She is on a hunger strike against her treatment.

Savchenko took part in the popular Maidan mobilizations two years ago that forced out the pro-Moscow regime of Victor Yanukovych. After Moscow annexed Crimea and backed armed separatists who have seized sections of the eastern regions in Ukraine of Donetsk and Luhansk, she volunteered to fight against the separatists. On June 17, 2014,

she was captured, taken across the border into Russia and held in detention for more than 600 days.

Savchenko denies all of the charges against her, which Moscow has shifted several times. Prosecutors claim she helped direct mortar fire at a checkpoint where the two journalists died. Her lawyers presented evidence this occurred *after* she was captured by pro-Moscow separatists.

“I don’t believe you have a right to try me, and certainly not in a Russian court,” she declared Feb. 1 during the trial. “I am a soldier,” she said. “You are treating me like a murderer.”

During her imprisonment, Savchenko has been interrogated without a lawyer present, denied consular visits, and barred from receiving letters, books and visitors. In court, she testified inside a glass cage.

Actions demanding her freedom took place in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities; in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where protesters were arrested by Russian authorities; across Europe; and in New York, Seattle, Chicago, Los Angeles and other cities in the U.S.

“I admire the Russians who are protesting inside Russia demanding her release,” Olga Espero, a Ukrainian, told the *Militant* at a March 12 protest outside the Russian Embassy in London. Savchenko was “captured by Russian forces who should never have been in Ukraine.”

Savchenko, who was elected to both the Ukrainian and European parliaments while imprisoned, is reportedly getting weaker, but as part of her closing



Above, demonstration in Kiev March 6, part of international protests demanding freedom for pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was captured and kidnapped from Ukraine in 2014. Savchenko, right, during frame-up trial in Moscow April 2015.



statement at trial March 9 she sang the Ukrainian national anthem and gave the judge the finger.

Dozens of Ukrainian political prisoners are being held in Russia and Crimea, including Crimean filmmaker Oleg Sentsov; Gennady Afanasyev, who was

tortured into incriminating Sentsov but recanted his testimony at trial; Crimean Tatar Mejlis (parliament) leader Akhtem Chiygiz; and many more Tatars.

Minnesota action: ‘Prosecute cops for murder of my brother’

BY ROSE ENGSTROM AND JACQUIE HENDERSON

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, Minn. — “No justice, no peace. Prosecute the police,” chanted 40 supporters of the family of Michael Kirvelay outside the police station in this northeastern Minneapolis suburb March 5. “We’re here to demand that they prosecute the police for the murder of my brother and for the illegal detainment of my siblings,” Bill Kirvelay told the rally. “We want them to release the body cam and all the police reports.”

One of Michael Kirvelay’s sisters, Jamie Costilla, had called for help Nov. 24 when she thought he was emotionally distressed. Sgt. Erik Johnston of the Columbia Heights Police Department and Shawn Murphy from the Fridley Police Department responded. A distraught Michael Kirvelay, a 45-year-old Caucasian, had a BB gun, and then got behind

and grabbed his sister, Denise Larson, according to press accounts.

“And within less than two minutes they murdered my brother, shooting him in the face, putting my family, my siblings in danger and committing a gruesome act of violence,” Bill Kirvelay said. After the shooting the officers took the two sisters into custody for several hours.

Since November the three family members have organized protests and spoken at other actions against police brutality, including demonstrations calling for prosecution of the cop who killed Jamar Clark on Nov. 15 in Minneapolis.

The Anoka County Attorney’s office announced March 7 the case will go to a grand jury in May. Bill Kirvelay said the secretive grand jury process won’t help the family learn the truth. They plan to continue to fight for the prosecution of the officers who shot their brother.



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THE MILITANT

Protest Washington’s threats against NKorea

The ‘Militant’ tells the truth about Washington’s hostility toward North Korea and the role of U.S. imperialism in keeping Korea divided. U.N. sanctions and U.S.-South Korean military exercises are not in the interest of working people in Korea or the United States.



Sipa via AP/Lee Young-ho
March 7 protest in Seoul against U.S.-South Korean war “games” on Korean Peninsula

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The Militant

Vol. 80/No. 12
Closing news date: March 16, 2016
Editor: John Studer
Managing Editor: Naomi Craine
Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Emma Johnson, Jacob Perasso, Gerardo Sánchez, Maggie Trowe, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.
Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in June, one week in July, one week in August and one week in September.
Business manager: Lea Sherman
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com
Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 13th floor, New York, NY 10018.
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Socialist Workers Party launches state campaigns

The Socialist Workers Party has launched candidates for U.S. Senate and other offices across the country. They are:

California — Eleanor García, Senate
Florida — Cynthia Jaquith, Senate
Georgia — Sam Manuel, Senate
Illinois — Dan Fein, Senate
Minnesota — David Rosenfeld, U.S. House of Representatives, District 5
New York — Jacob Perasso, Senate
Pennsylvania — John Staggs, Senate
Washington — Mary Martin, Governor
Washington, D.C. — Glova Scott, U.S. House of Representatives

Along with SWP presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy and Osborne Hart for vice president, they are joining in struggles of working people and presenting a working-class alternative to all of the capitalist parties and politicians.



Wendy Lyons from Los Angeles reports that when nurses at Kaiser Permanente's Los Angeles Medical Center began a weeklong strike March 15, SWP candidate Eleanor García joined the picket line and distributed a statement supporting their fight. The 1,200 nurses voted to join the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United in July and are fighting for their first contract.

"We have to stand up," John Mark, a young nurse who started some months ago, told García. "There are not enough nurses and it is risky for the patients when there is not enough staff."

"Nurses here have been fighting for over six years to get better pay and pensions and for better staffing," Joy Guinto said.

Below is García's statement.



The Socialist Workers Party supports your fight for a union contract. I'm here on the picket line with you and urge others to do likewise.

All workers need unions. It's the starting point for fighting the depression-driven assaults by the bosses, backed by their government. As you point out, Kaiser Permanente has made over \$14 billion in profit in the

last six years while freezing nurses' wages.

You are not alone. Thousands of people have marched for a \$15 an hour minimum wage. Port truck drivers and warehouse workers in Los Angeles are fighting for union recognition.

Our unions can become an effective fighting force. It starts with relying on solidarity and mobilization. We also have to recognize that all the capitalist party candidates — from Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton to Donald Trump — seek to rescue capitalism at our expense from the international contraction in production, trade and employment. There is a burning need to break from the bosses political parties and build our own independent labor party based on the unions.

Your fight is for something bigger than your own self-interest. That attitude is what we need to counter the dog-eat-dog capitalist system which has turned health care into a commodity to be bought and sold, depriving billions the world over of a basic human right. This won't be solved short of a mighty struggle to wrest political power from the billionaire rulers and reorganize all society on a foundation different than the current dictatorship



Inset, Militant/Clay Dennison

Eleanor García, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate, joins nurses striking for first contract at Kaiser Permanente in Los Angeles March 15. Inset, Mary Martin, SWP candidate for governor of Washington, expresses solidarity for fight to defend Ukrainian sovereignty at March 8 rally in Seattle demanding release of Nadiya Savchenko, imprisoned and framed up by Moscow.



of capital — a socialist society.

In socialist Cuba, a revolution secured health care for all. On top of that, the Cuban people send tens of thousands of medical personnel around the world, not for profit, but as part of what they see as

their debt to humanity. As they say, they don't give what they have left over, they share what they have.

When you win your fight for your first union contract, it will be a victory for all working people.

Socialist candidate gets hearing at Trump event

Continued from front page

Kennedy's statement stands in stark contrast to the celebration of the disruption on the left and among liberals who are increasingly shrill in charging Trump with being the spearhead of a rising racist and fascist movement. This could be "remembered as the dawn of the resistance," declared *Washington Post* columnist Eugene Robinson March 14.

Republican rivals Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and John Kasich said they opposed the disruptions, but argued they are Trump's own fault, suggesting his politics encourage violence.

None of this has derailed Trump's campaign. He won four of the five primary elections held March 15. Rubio, a senator from Florida, suspended his

campaign after losing to Trump in his home state by a wide margin. Trump's loss to Ohio Gov. Kasich in Ohio was expected. In all these states Trump won a big vote from working people.

Far from representing a rising rightist movement, Trump gets a hearing from workers and others who have been battered by the effects of years of the world capitalist economic crisis, and who are looking for something different from "establishment" politicians they know offer no solutions.

It's for similar reasons that Bernie Sanders continues to get a substantial response. He got nearly half the vote in both Illinois and Missouri, even as the media is declaring that Hillary Clinton has the Democratic nomination virtually sewn up.

On the day of Trump's rally, several thousand people demonstrated outside while others entered the meeting room. Their goal was "for Donald to take the stage and to completely interrupt him. The plan is to shut Donald Trump all the way down," Quovadis Green told the Associated Press.

When a campaign staffer announced that due to safety concerns the rally was canceled, those who organized to disrupt it erupted in cheers, celebrating their victory over free speech. Some chanted "Bernie, Bernie," waving Sanders campaign signs. A few Trump supporters confronted them. The big majority of those who had come to hear Trump looked incredulous, upset he wouldn't be speaking.

Fight for unions, jobs, wages

SWP candidate Kennedy had wide-ranging discussions with many workers and young people who came hoping to hear Trump. She handed a campaign flyer to Jordan Strange, an 18-year-old student from Naperville, as they waited in line to get in. The Socialist Workers

Party campaign "is part of the struggles of working people," she said, "including the fight for \$15 an hour and a union at McDonald's and Walmart."

"But McDonald's is not a job for life, it's a job for teenagers," Strange said. "Shouldn't we concentrate on creating jobs instead?"

"We need both," Kennedy replied. "Workers of all ages make low wages and work part time or are unemployed. I took a leave from my job at a Walmart to run in this election. We must fight to increase wages for everyone, and also fight for a government-funded public works program to create jobs, build schools and medical facilities, child care and recreation centers, replace crumbling infrastructure and other things working people need. And unions are essential, a first step to relying on our own strength as a class."

Fernando Garcia, an engineer at a local sheet metal factory, came to the rally with his son Eric, a brake press operator at the same plant. "I don't know who I'll vote for," Fernando Garcia said. Like many there he came to hear what Trump had to offer.

"Trump is not a politician. He is not bought off," said Eric Garcia, who was wearing a Trump campaign button.

Kennedy responded, "No Democrat, Republican or other capitalist candidate will do anything about the attacks against the working class. They talk

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BOOKS FOR WORKING-CLASS FIGHTERS ...

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?

by Mary-Alice Waters

Why revolutionary struggles by working people are inevitable, initiated not by the toilers, but forced upon us by the employing class's crisis-driven assaults on our living standards and job conditions. As solidarity grows among a fighting vanguard of working people, the outlines of coming class battles can already be seen. \$7

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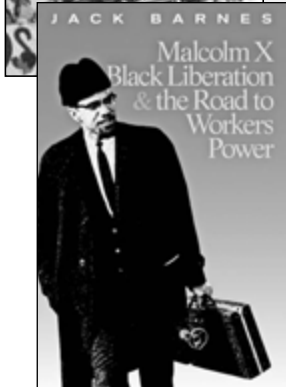
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ATI workers return to work with heads high after lockout

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

Members of the United Steelworkers began returning to work at Allegheny Technologies Inc. mills after voting by a 5-to-1 margin March 1 to accept a contract that includes significant concessions.

ATI plants reopened March 14 after safety walk-throughs by the union, ending a lockout a day short of seven months. On all three shifts members of Local 7139-05 in Washington, Pennsylvania, came into the mill together.

“On day shift we hired a school bus, but there were a lot of people, so some walked in,” Skip Longdon, local president, told the *Militant* in a phone interview that night. “We carried signs that read, ‘Solidarity.’”

ATI, a specialty metals manufacturer, locked out 2,200 workers at 12 plants in six states Aug. 15. The bosses hired the scab-herding outfit Strom Engineering to line up hundreds of replacement workers, who started working the day after the lockout began.

“There are no guarantees in this contract, and no specifics regarding contracting out and scheduling. Back at work our solidarity will be put to

another test,” Terry Stinson, a member of USW Local 1138 who works at the Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, mill, told the *Militant*.

ATI President Robert Wetherbee told the media in December the bosses have a “once-in-a-generation opportunity” to cut labor costs by imposing a lower tier for new hires, as up to a third of the workers approach retirement. Under the terms of the four-year agreement, workers hired after March 1 will not get pensions or health benefits when they retire.

Some workers say they are scheduled for seven days straight their first week back, while others have not been called yet. Some were told their jobs have been eliminated and they have to bid on other jobs before they can return to work. The future of the 600 Steelworkers at two Pennsylvania plants — the shuttered Midland mill and the soon to be closed Bagdad mill — is up in the air.

“Actually, now there are three tiers,” said Alan Braden, a Local 1138 member in Bagdad, March 11. “Myself and other members get a lower pension than the higher seniority members, and now the company will put money into a 401(k) for new hires. I don’t agree with it. I’m still old school — because we are all one.”

The contract includes a \$1 an hour



USW

Members of United Steelworkers Local 7139-05 return to work together at Allegheny Technologies Inc. mill in Washington, Pennsylvania, March 14 after seven-month lockout.

wage increase, at the same time as the company eliminates the \$1.50 per hour worked quarterly bonus under the old contract. There are no other wage increases over the life of the contract. Other provisions include increased health costs for active members, and a quarterly profit-sharing plan.

The contract vote reflected the decision by many that they achieved as much as they could in this round of the fight.

The National Labor Relations Board sided with the union on charges that ATI threatened members of the United

Steelworkers and violated the previous contract, but its first hearing on this wasn’t scheduled until May 23. The long delay gave the advantage to the company, especially as the locked-out workers’ unemployment benefits ran out in February. ATI made dropping the NLRB complaint a condition for contract ratification.

“The lockout was pretty hard on everybody. But the one thing it has done is make the union stronger,” Leisa Brothers, a janitor with 22 years at Brackenridge, said by phone March 13.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW YORK

New York

Hear the Socialist Workers Party Candidates: Alyson Kennedy for President, Jacob Perasso for U.S. Senate. Fri., March 25. Dinner, 6:45 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: Dinner, \$7; program, \$5. 227 W. 29th St., 6th Floor. Tel.: (646) 964-4793.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

The World Capitalist Crisis and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. Meet the Socialist Workers Party Candidates. Speakers: Alyson Kennedy, SWP candidate for U.S. president; Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for vice president; John Staggs, SWP candidate for U.S. Senate. Sat. March 26. Reception, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 2824 Cottman Ave., Suite 20. Tel.: (215) 708-1270.

CANADA

Calgary

Obama Visits Cuba as Representative of U.S. Imperialism: End the Embargo, Return Guantánamo and Respect Cuba’s Sovereignty. Speaker: Joe Young, Communist League. Fri., March 25, 7:30 p.m. 4909 17th Ave. SE. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

Montreal

SWP Candidate for U.S. President Alyson Kennedy: Cancellation of Donald Trump Chicago Rally a Blow to Free Speech. Speaker: Beverly Bernardo, Communist League. Fri., March 25, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Suite 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester

As Obama Visits Cuba: End the Economic War, Return Guantánamo! Speaker: Catharina Tirsén, Communist League. Sat., March 26, 6:30 p.m. 301 Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.

—CALENDAR—

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Cuba-U.S. Relations: Where It Stands Today. Speaker: Miguel Fraga, First Secretary of the Cuban Embassy. Sat., April 2, 7 p.m. David A. Clarke School of Law, University of the District of Columbia. 4340 Connecticut Ave. NW, Room 516. Tel.: (202) 986-5839.

New revelations point to bosses, gov’t in rail disaster

Continued from front page

ing death that could mean life in prison — as scapegoats for the disaster. Low-level operations manager Jean Demaitre faces similar charges.

“It’s hard to understand why the owners of the MMA were not charged, or the previous Minister of Transport, instead of the three who were charged,” André Blais, an activist in the Citizens and Groups Coalition for Rail Safety in Lac-Mégantic, told the *Militant* after seeing the *Globe* articles.

After parking the 72-car crude oil train seven miles from Lac-Mégantic, Harding went to bed after a 12-hour shift. As he had done many times before, he set the lead engine’s air brakes and a number of hand brakes on tanker cars.

Firefighters who responded to a small fire on the locomotive caused by inadequate company maintenance turned the engine off. This action, approved by a company agent on the scene, caused the air brakes to bleed out. The train rolled down the seven-mile grade into the city, where it derailed and exploded, killing 47 people and burning out the historic downtown area.

Robertson quotes rail industry experts who explain that the “automatic” braking system available on the tanker cars would have held the train in place after the lead locomotive’s air brakes bled out.

The decision by Montreal, Maine and Atlantic bosses to order engineers not to use the “automatic” backup system, a decision unchallenged by Transport Canada officials, was aimed at saving time and money. Operating the trains would be delayed by 15 minutes to an hour in the morning while air was pumped back into the braking system.

MMA “had a reputation as one of

the most aggressive cost-cutters in the rail industry and had received unusual exemptions from Transport Canada, such as operating with a one-man crew, which allowed it to save money on labour,” reported Robertson.

Transport Canada has now put in place new regulations calling for use of the backup automatic braking system.

The official 179-page Transportation Safety Board report on the Lac-Mégantic disaster has a single paragraph on page 105 that says it “likely” would have been avoided if the backup system had been used, the *Globe* reports. But the safety board report focuses on blaming Harding for not setting more hand brakes.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if we get more surprises” as this whole thing unravels, Thomas Walsh, Harding’s attorney, told the *Militant*. “The purpose of the charges from the beginning has been to distance us from the real problems and the people who caused them. Our focus should be on the individuals who made the decisions for Transport Canada and the MMA, like the decision to operate the trains with a one-man crew.”

No trial date has yet been set for Harding and Labrie. Walsh said he will present a motion asking the judge for a “stay of proceedings” — basically to dismiss the charges — at a hearing set for April 4.

“There is no material here for a criminal trial,” Walsh said, all the crown prosecutor is preparing is a “show trial.”

Meanwhile, rail bosses are “experimenting with a new place for storing excess crude: empty railcars,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported Feb. 28. Because of the sharp drop in oil prices over the last year, oil companies are looking to store oil rather than ship it. And rail-

roads have an estimated 20,000 empty tank cars, some one-third of the North American fleet. So the bosses are putting cars full of volatile oil on sidings near active tracks and populated areas.

“Issues range from leaky cars to the risk of collisions and fires,” the *Journal* said.

Solidarity messages for the Tom Harding and Richard Labrie defense should be sent to their union, USW 1976 / Section locale 1976, 2360 De Lasalle, Suite 202, Montreal, QC H1V 2L1. Email: info@1976usw.ca. Copies should be sent to: Thomas Walsh, 165 Rue Wellington N. Suite 310, Sherbrooke, QC Canada J1H 5B9. Email: thomaswalsh@hotmail.com

Contributions can be sent in Canada to Syndicat des Métallistes, 565, boulevard Crémazie Est, bureau 5100, Montreal, QC H2M 2V8. In the U.S. send checks to Tom Harding Defense Fund, First Niagara Bank, 25 McClellan Drive, Nassau, NY 12123.

Teamster Politics

by Farrell Dobbs

Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party. **\$19. Also in Spanish**

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—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles across the country!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including Steelworkers opposing concessions, construction workers demanding safe conditions and workers fighting for \$15 and a union. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

Teamster airline mechanics picket United at aviation event

NEW YORK — Chanting “No contract, no flights!” and “What’ll we do? Strike!” more than 100 mechanics and other members of Teamsters Airline Division picketed March 8 in Midtown Manhattan outside the Aviation, Transportation and Industrials Conference hosted by J.P. Morgan investment bank.

Members of Local 210, who work at the three major airports here, were joined by mechanics who flew in from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Chicago, Cleveland, Boston and Houston.

“We are not rolling in cash,” said 29-year mechanic Vincent LoBiondo, who works at Newark Liberty International Airport. “We are just trying to make a living. The airlines are very profitable right now.” Seven years ago mechanics agreed to big pay cuts — some \$500 per person per month — LoBiondo said, to keep the airline profitable. Now they have worked three years without a contract and without a raise.

The unionists are demanding a defined pension, which was replaced by a 401(k) plan during United’s 2002 bankruptcy. They oppose the company’s demand for wage and benefit cuts for new hires, higher medical payments and the option to contract out more work.

“One way or another we have to get it back to how it was before,” said Lino Hernández, a Newark mechanic with 30 years’ experience. “So we have to show the power of the workers. If we have to strike, we will.”

— Jacob Perasso

New Zealand meat workers protest union-busting layoff

RANGIURU, New Zealand — Meat giant AFFCO laid off 214 meat workers here March 4 in its latest anti-union move. Four days later members of the Meat Workers Union picketed outside the plant.

AFFCO disregarded seniority in the layoff. “This is a form of union busting,” union shed secretary Bertie Ratu told the *Militant*. “Union workers with 45 years’ experience are out of a job while staff on individual contracts with 45 days on the job are still working.” It is not the fault of the newer workers, she said. “A lot of them want to join the union, but we don’t have a contract to offer them.”

AFFCO has been imposing “Individual Employment Agreements” on union members at eight plants, rather than renegotiating the expired union contract. In November workers won a round in this battle when the Employment Court ruled AFFCO must abide by the union contract for those covered by it. In February the court confirmed this included seniority provisions, ending a five-month lockout of unionists at the Wairoa plant.

The company fired Ratu and del-

egate Charmaine Takai last year for union activities, but a court had just ordered them reinstated. Both had been working for less than a week.

“Told by court reinstate! 4 days later out the gate! Talley’s SHAME ON YOU!!!” read Takai’s placard. Talley’s is AFFCO’s parent company.

Workers at the 30-strong picket gave examples of the company’s disregard for safety. An inexperienced young German on a working holiday visa was injured Jan. 15 after being caught in a machine and knocked unconscious. Two years ago a machine hook impaled a cleaner’s head and carried him along a moving chain in the same area. A court just ruled that accident was a result of AFFCO’s violation of health and safety laws. Government statistics report 1,286 Talley’s workers were injured on the job in 2014.

The picket took place the day the company in this rural area invites its farmer suppliers to tour the plant. Workers called out to the farmers, “We’re your neighbors. Our kids go to school together. Would you want your kids to work under these conditions?”

“I’ve been in the union since day one. Otherwise you get treated like dirt, like nobody,” Iria Taite, a laid-off butcher with 11 years at the plant, told the *Militant*.

— Janet Roth

Teamster rail worker wins reinstatement in Alberta

CALGARY, Alberta — Teamsters union member Stephanie Katelnikoff, 26, was reinstated with back pay and benefits at Canadian Pacific Railway a year after she was fired. The company assigned her to work as a conductor less than five months into what is



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Teamster airline mechanics and supporters protest United Airlines concession contract demands outside J.P. Morgan-sponsored conference of airline bosses March 8 in New York.

normally a six-month training period. On her second run, the train carrying grains and toxic fly ash, used to make concrete, derailed in Banff National Park Dec. 26, 2014.

Katelnikoff filed a union grievance after she was fired the following month. Arbitrator Maureen Flynn ruled that “the grounds cited for Ms. Katelnikoff’s dismissal are factually inaccurate and unfounded.” Canadian Pacific reported it fired her in part because she didn’t immediately report pulmonary problems resulting from inhaling fly ash dust after the derailment. Those allegations, Flynn wrote, “appear to be a camouflage of the Company’s actual reasons that are discriminatory and in bad faith.” The investigation revealed that a sexual harassment complaint Katelnikoff filed against a co-worker was a factor in the firing.

As she prepared to return to work, Katelnikoff briefly posted an open letter to Canadian Pacific CEO Hunter Harrison on YouTube demanding the railroad respect human rights and cease putting profits before safety and workers’ rights. “Hundreds of railroaders from all over North America sent me messages” of support, Katelnikoff told the *Militant* March 1.

Katelnikoff has requested the railroad complete her training before she is sent out again.

Train derailments and collisions are

common here. On Feb. 18, 14 Canadian Pacific cars derailed in Inglewood, a Calgary neighborhood near the Alyth rail yard. Two CP tank cars full of propane collided Jan. 31 near Edmonton while being operated by a worker wearing a remote control “belt-pack,” a technology whose use the company is expanding, CBC reported.

— Katy LeRougetel

Los Angeles port truck drivers strike at XPO Logistics, Pac 9

LOS ANGELES — Striking port truck drivers at XPO Logistics picketed their terminal in Commerce Feb. 29, protesting a new contract imposed on them by the company.

“XPO Logistics has us against the wall,” driver Humberto Canales said on the port truckers’ Facebook page. “They are forcing us to sign a contract that prevents us from defending ourselves in the future in the courts. But if we don’t sign it, XPO could use that as an excuse to lay us off. ... This is retaliation. It is harassment.”

Drivers at Pacific 9 Transportation also picketed their terminal the same day to protest the company stalling on payment of millions of dollars in penalties for wage theft after the California Labor Commissioner ruled Dec. 14 that they should be classified as employees, not independent contractors.

— Bill Arth

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 29, 1991

LOS ANGELES — Four of 15 cops involved in the brutal beating of construction worker Rodney King have been arrested and indicted on felony assault charges. The grand jury that handed down the indictments is still taking testimony and considering further charges.

The indictments are a result of the nationwide outcry and protests here after millions saw a videotaped recording of King being savagely kicked, clubbed more than 50 times by baton-wielding cops, and shocked with a stun gun March 3.

King is still hospitalized.

Many protesters are demanding Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl Gates be fired. Notorious for racist statements against Blacks, Latinos, and immigrant workers, Gates has refused to step down.



March 28, 1966

With the Vietnam war escalating steadily, the American people must face the issue of what they have been dragged into. Even the heaviest propaganda barrage can no longer conceal the fact that U.S. armed forces are waging a genocidal war against the great mass of the people of Vietnam — a people whose sympathy and support are clearly with the guerrilla forces that the U.S. government is so determined to crush.

It is precisely because the people are with the guerrillas that the U.S. has been compelled to steadily increase its commitment. The Saigon government cannot find sufficient soldiers willing to fight and die for its tyrannical dictatorship. In sharp contrast, the guerrilla fighters of the National Liberation Front have shown a remarkable capacity for waging an effective fight against a force with far superior military resources.



March 29, 1941

With the publication, in Moscow and Ankara, of a declaration pledging “full neutrality and understanding” on the part of Moscow towards Turkey in case of an attack by Hitler against Turkey, Stalin, for the second time in the period of one month, has openly indicated fear of and hostility to Hitler’s activities in the Balkans.

Stalin’s previous move came in the form of a note to Bulgaria in which the Kremlin chided the Bulgarian government for permitting German occupation, and predicted it would lead to extension of the war and not, as claimed by the German and Bulgarian governments, lead to peace in the Balkans.

Should Hitler’s armies succeed in gaining control of the Dardanelles, the only all-year-round outlet of the Soviet Union to the outside world would be in the hands of a powerful enemy.

Oregon probe whitewashes cop, FBI killing of Finicum

BY SETH GALINSKY

Six weeks after Robert “LaVoy” Finicum was gunned down by Oregon State Police and the FBI, the Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office held a press conference March 8 and released the results of their “investigation” into his death, exonerating all the cop agencies. The report reveals for the first time that Finicum was shot three times in the back and raises a number of questions about the ambush, including why FBI agents denied firing two shots, one of which hit Finicum’s pickup truck.

The killing and whitewash are an attack on ranchers and farmers seeking to protect their land and livelihood from government interference.

The report confirms key details given by Shawna Cox and Victoria Sharp, who were in the vehicle with Finicum that day and who charged that Finicum was murdered in cold blood.

Finicum was a leader of the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, organized to draw attention to the frame-up and second imprisonment of local cattle ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond and to federal policies and practices that have been driving many small farmers and ranchers off the land. Some half of the acreage in the West is controlled by Washington agencies.

On Jan. 26, Finicum was driving a vehicle, with Cox, Sharp, Ryan Bundy and Ryan Payne inside. Occupation leader Ammon Bundy and others were in another. They were on their way to a community meeting in John Day, Oregon, when they were ambushed.

Ammon Bundy and those in his car surrendered to the cops. But when Payne stuck his head and hands outside Finicum’s truck, the cops shot a 40 mm foam-nosed round containing pepper spray at him. He got out and was arrested by troopers.

According to a recording made by Cox and played at the press conference, Finicum told the cops, “I’m going over to meet with the sheriff in Grant County. You can come along with us and talk with us over there.” Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer, who was sympathetic to the campaign to free the Hammonds, was at the John Day meeting.

The recordings show that at no time did Finicum or anyone else in the vehicle make any threats or point any weapons at the police or FBI.

FBI agents shot, covered it up

Finicum drove off but came upon a police roadblock. As he approached,

troopers fired three shots into his truck. The Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office report said that during their investigation they discovered a fourth bullet hole in Finicum’s vehicle. Sheriff Shane Nelson said that while FBI agents denied having fired any shots, it was clear that they had fired two, one through the roof of the vehicle.

The Sheriff’s Office also found that FBI agents removed a bullet at the scene and then replaced it. Nelson said that as a result of this and other “specific actions,” the FBI agents are under investigation.

Finicum tried to get around the roadblock and crashed into a snow bank. He got out of the car with his hands up. The sheriff’s report says that the troopers were justified in killing Finicum because they feared for their lives, saying it appeared he was reaching toward his jacket as if going for a gun.

After Finicum was shot, they left him there without any medical attention for more than 10 minutes while firing an undisclosed number of “gas projectiles and flash bangs” at the pickup.

“They shot my husband,” Jeanette Finicum, LaVoy’s wife, said in a March 9 news release responding to the report. “They left him lying in the snowbank — no medical assistance, no charges, no arraignment, no preliminary hearing, no indictment, and no trial by a jury — and should they just walk free? It just is not right.”

The next day she told the press she will file a civil rights suit against the government for killing her husband.

New charges against ranchers

Federal prosecutors announced March 9 they were filing a “superseding indictment” against Ammon Bundy and 25 others accused in the peaceful occupation of the Malheur refuge.

In addition to previous charges of “conspiracy to impede” federal officers, the new indictment adds charges ranging from “possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in federal facilities” to theft of federal property. One of the weapons charges carries the possibility of a life sentence.

Bundy and six others involved in the occupation have also just been indicted

‘Fire NY cops who killed Ramarley Graham!’



AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews

NEW YORK — Constance Malcolm, speaking at March 10 press conference, condemned the refusal of U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara to bring federal civil rights charges against Richard Haste, the New York City cop who gunned down her 18-year-old son Ramarley Graham.

Bharara announced March 8 that his office had conducted “a thorough and independent investigation” but that “neither accident, mistake, fear, negligence nor bad judgment is sufficient” to bring charges.

“That doesn’t make any sense,” Malcolm told the *Militant* March 15. “The officers spent four minutes outside my house, walking around, kicking the doors before they broke in. How can you say what he did was out of fear?”

“They’re saying you’re not safe in your own home,” Malcolm said. “All the cop has to say is ‘I thought someone had a gun’ and break in.”

Haste was part of a group of police that followed Graham home Feb. 2, 2012. They claim they saw the teenager adjust his pants as if he had a gun. Haste broke into the house and chased Graham into the bathroom where he shot and killed the unarmed youth.

Haste was indicted for manslaughter in 2012, but the case was thrown out because of mistakes made by the prosecution. A second grand jury failed to indict him.

“We’re not going to stop protesting,” Malcolm said. “We want Haste and all the cops involved to be fired. This isn’t about revenge. This is about accountability. We don’t want another mother to lose a son.”

— SETH GALINSKY

along with his father Cliven Bundy and others for joining a protest at Cliven’s ranch in Bunkerville, Nevada, in April 2014 to prevent federal agents from confiscating 400 of his cattle.

At a March 10 hearing in Las Vegas, Cliven Bundy refused to make a plea. According to Associated Press, Bundy has “consistently denied U.S. government authority over rangeland around his 160-acre cattle ranch and melon farm” about 80 miles northeast of Las Vegas.

With his ankles shackled, Bundy, 69, waved to about 40 supporters in the courtroom. Dozens more marched outside. The Nevada rancher believes “the states to be the owners of pubic land and

not the federal government,” Joel Hansen, Bundy’s lawyer at the hearing, told the press.

Ranchers throughout the West see the frame-up of the Hammonds and persecution of the Bundys as examples of what they call federal overreach that has restricted grazing rights and driven ranchers off their land, often under the pretense of protecting endangered species.

A nonbinding ballot measure to designate 2.5 million acres of the Owyhee Canyonlands in Malheur County as a national monument — making it easier for federal authorities to deny grazing rights — was defeated 5,291 to 609 March 8.

Jump in charges, firings of cops result of protests

Continued from front page

says, isn’t that cops are killing more people. “The citizenry, media, and even the courts are much more skeptical of police claims of justification after having shot and killed someone,” he said.

Of the cops charged in on-duty shooting deaths some 22 percent have been convicted, Stinson said. On Feb. 11, New York City cop Peter Liang became the first cop in the U.S. since 2013 to be convicted for killing someone while on duty. Liang shot and killed Akai Gurley in the stairwell of a Brooklyn apartment building.

In the wake of nationwide protests, the propertied rulers have taken steps to rein in wanton acts of police brutality. The demonstrations have encouraged the willingness of witnesses to record and publicly release videos of police abuse.

In some well-publicized cases, even

when charges are not filed, killer cops have been fired or forced to resign. None of the Cleveland police who shot Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams in a hail of 137 bullets in 2012 were convicted for their deaths. But in January this year six of the cops were fired.

Between 900 and 1,100 people are shot to death by cops in the U.S. every year, the *Washington Post* reports. About half of those killed are Caucasians and about one-quarter are Blacks.

In a related development, New York City police stops and street interrogations known as stop and frisk are down dramatically. The New York Civil Liberties Union reports that stop and frisks peaked at more than 685,000 stops in 2011. Since then, under pressure from street protests and outrage over police brutality, city officials ordered a shift in policy. By 2015 the number of reported stops had

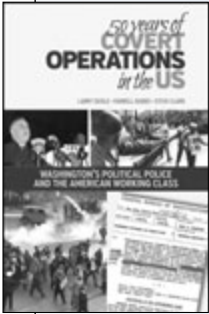
dropped to under 23,000.

The protests over the last two years, from Ferguson, Missouri, to Baltimore, and Staten Island, New York, have had an impact across the U.S. and around the world. Last year Ethiopian Jews in Israel held protests under the slogan of Black Lives Matter after the slogan of Black Lives Matter after cops beat an Ethiopian-Israeli soldier.

In Council, Idaho, a farm town of about 800 people, demonstrators protesting the November killing of cattle rancher Jack Yantis by sheriff deputies carried signs that said, “Ranchers Lives Matter.” In Paradise, California, friends of Andrew Thomas, a Caucasian youth, protested his death at the hands of cop Patrick Feaster with signs that said, “All Lives Matter.” These protesters weren’t counterposing these slogans to “Black Lives Matter,” but drew inspiration from growing actions across the country against the killing of Blacks.

50 Years of Covert Operations in the US

by Larry Seigle, Farrell Dobbs, Steve Clark



The 15-year political campaign of the Socialist Workers Party to expose decades of spying and disruption by the FBI and other federal cop agencies targeting working-class organizations and other opponents of government policies.

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‘Women’s oppression, like the state, is not eternal’

Below are excerpts from the introduction to *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Frederick Engels, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month in March. It was written by Evelyn Reed, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and participant in the women’s liberation movement of the 1960s and ’70s. Reed wrote extensively on the origins of women’s oppression and the fight for their emancipation, building on Engels’ work. Engels, along with Karl Marx, a founder of the modern revolutionary workers movement, shows how women’s oppression is neither “natural” nor everlasting, and how the development of the modern working class creates the basis to end that oppression. Copyright © 1972 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY EVELYN REED

Engels’s *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, published almost a hundred years ago, is today enjoying a resurgence of popularity. This came about with the emergence of the women’s liberation movement in the United States and Canada during the late 1960s. Along with organizing and acting to end the deep-rooted discrimination against the female sex, women today want to know how their oppression originated and whether it has always existed. That is why so many feminists are



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Class exploitation and sexual oppression of women were born together to serve the interests of the private-property system, Engels explains. And they work together for the same ends to the present day. Above, March 2 rally outside Supreme Court in defense of women’s right to choose abortion.

turning to Engels’s classic work, a book that can not only arm the movement theoretically but inspire it with confidence that liberation can be won.

This study was based upon the findings set forth by Lewis H. Morgan, founder of American anthropology, in his *Ancient Society*, published in 1877. Engels’s book appeared in 1884 in Zurich in an edition of 5,000 copies. For its fourth printing in 1891 he prepared a revised version with a new preface which took into account additional data on the subject.

This work has gone through many editions in many languages. It is one of the most widely read and influential contributions to historical materialism, analyzing the transition from primitive to class society with the same method that Marx employed to investigate the capitalist system. As Lenin appraised it in his lecture “The State,” delivered at the Sverdlov University, July 11, 1919, “This is one of the fundamental works of modern socialism, every sentence of which can be accepted with confidence, in the assurance that it has not been said at random but is based on immense historical and political material” (*Collected Works*, vol. 29, p. 473).

Although the book was not published until after Marx’s death, it was, as Engels said, a joint project born from the constant interchange of views over decades between the two men on the origins of civilization and its institutions. Maxim Kovalevsky, the Russian ethnologist, had brought a copy of Morgan’s book

from the United States to England for Marx to read. Marx immediately began making notes on it to spell out his own conclusions. Utilizing these fragmentary materials, Engels carried out the assignment that his collaborator had initiated, as he had done for the unfinished second and third volumes of *Capital*.

Both men were struck by the fact that Morgan had in his own way taken a materialist approach to the study of primitive society. Through his careful research, pursued over forty years, Morgan unwittingly spotlighted the fact that the key institutions of civilized society — the family, private property, and the state — were nonexistent in prehistoric life. These topics became the title of Engels’s book.

Morgan’s data confirmed the Marxist principle that social institutions are not unchanging or eternal but come into existence at certain periods of history as a result of specific socioeconomic conditions. Engels gave unstinting praise to Morgan’s thesis that the maternal gens or clan preceded the father-family in history, proving that even the family institution is no exception to that rule. This discovery, he said, held the same importance for anthropology as Darwin’s theory of evolution had for biology and Marx’s theory of surplus value for political economy. “Since its discovery,” he wrote, “we know in which direction to conduct our researches, what to investigate, and how to classify the results of our investigations.”...

Side by side with the rise of state

power to maintain the rule of the rich over the poor, there also developed the coercive patriarchal family institution. This brought about the dispersal and isolation of women. The new branches of labor were taken over by the men, while women, who had formerly played a leading role in production, were relegated to domestic servitude for individual husband, home, and family. Where formerly women had played the most influential role in community affairs corresponding to their place in production, they were now removed from public life and cloistered in the home. The patriarchal family arose to control and subjugate women in the very same process whereby the state arose to subjugate and control laboring men. As Engels demonstrates, class exploitation and sexual oppression of women were born together to serve the interests of the private-property system. And they work together for the same ends to the present day.

The state has been the major instrument for the perpetuation of sovereignty by the wealthy classes through all three stages of civilized class society, from slavery through feudalism to capitalism. However much its forms of domination have varied, from autocracy to democracy, the state has served to keep social power in the hands of the exploiting class. As Engels wrote, “The cohesive force of civilized society is the state, which in all typical periods is exclusively the state of the ruling class, and in all cases remains essentially a machine for keeping down the oppressed, exploited class.”

To those who believe that the state is eternal, Engels emphasizes that it is a late arrival in history which did not exist before the rise of the private-property system. He gives three examples of the growth of the state out of the ruins of the gens or clan commune; the Athenian, the Roman, and the Germanic states. Although today the capitalist state, serving the giant monopolies and their imperialist designs, towers over the rest of society, it will survive only so long as the conditions that produced it continue to exist. He predicted that this coercive agent of the ruling powers would begin to wither away once the private property system that required it was abolished through a social revolution. A stateless society existed before class society appeared and will again come to be after capitalism disappears.

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March **BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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Cuba defends revolution

Continued from front page

Ministers, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, and President Barack Obama simultaneously announced the decision to re-establish diplomatic relations, broken by the United States almost 54 years ago. It is part of the complex process toward normalization of bilateral ties, which has barely begun and has advanced on the only basis that is possible and just: respect, equality, reciprocity, and the recognition of our government's legitimacy.

This point has been reached first and foremost as a result of the Cuban people's heroic resistance, loyalty to principles, and defense of our national independence and sovereignty. Such values, which have not been negotiated for more than 50 years, led the present U.S. government to acknowledge the severe damage the blockade has caused our people and to recognize the failure of the policy of open hostility toward the revolution.

Neither force nor economic coercion nor isolation succeeded in imposing conditions on Cuba that were contrary to the aspirations forged over nearly a century and a half of heroic struggle.

Washington isolated by solidarity

The current process undertaken with the United States has also been possible thanks to unwavering international solidarity, in particular from the governments and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, who put the United States in an unsustainable position of isolation. Strongly united — "like silver lodges in the bedrock of the Andes," as our national hero José Martí said in his essay "Our America" — Latin America and the Caribbean demanded a change in policy toward Cuba.

This regional demand was made unequivocally clear at the Summits of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, in 2009, and in Cartagena, Colombia, in 2012, when all

countries of the region unanimously and categorically demanded the lifting of the blockade and our country's participation in the 7th hemispheric meeting in Panama, in 2015, to which a Cuban delegation, led by Raúl, attended for the first time.

Since the December 2014 announcements, Cuba and the United States have taken steps toward improving the bilateral context.

On July 20, 2015, diplomatic relations were officially re-established, along with the commitment to develop them on the basis of respect, cooperation, and observance of the principles of international law.

The presidents of the two countries have met twice, in addition to mutual visits by ministers and other contacts between high-ranking officials. Cooperation in various areas of mutual benefit are advancing and new opportunities for discussion are opening up. That makes possible a dialogue on issues of bilateral and multilateral interest, including those on which we have different views.

The U.S. president will be welcomed by the government of Cuba and its people with the hospitality that distinguishes us. He will be treated with all consideration and respect as a head of state.

This will be an opportunity for the president of the United States to directly observe a nation engaged in economic and social development and in improving its citizens' well-being. Our people enjoy rights and can point to achievements that are only dreams for many of the world's countries, despite the limitations resulting from our condition as an underdeveloped country subjected to a blockade. This has earned us international recognition and respect.

Figures of world stature such as Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill described this island, in their joint statement released in Havana in February, as "a symbol of the hopes of the



Freedom Caravan of leaders of Rebel Army enters Havana Jan. 8, 1959. "We will not renounce our ideals of independence and social justice, surrender even a single one of our principles or concede a millimeter in the defense of our national sovereignty," Cuban President Raúl Castro said in 2015. "We have won this sovereign right with great sacrifices and the highest risks."

New World." French President Francois Hollande recently said, "Cuba is respected and listened to throughout Latin America," and praised the country's capacity for resistance in the face of the most difficult tests.

Cuba's internationalist example

South African leader Nelson Mandela always had words of profound gratitude for Cuba. Speaking July 26, 1991, in Matanzas, he said, "We in Africa are used to being victims of countries who want to carve up our territory or subvert our sovereignty. It is unparalleled in African history to have another people [like the Cuban people] rise to the defense of one of us."

Obama will find himself in a country that actively contributes to regional and world peace and stability, and that shares with other peoples not what we have left over but the modest resources we possess. We have made solidarity an essential element of our reason for being. And, as Martí taught us, we have made humanity's well-being one of the fundamental objectives of our foreign policy.

Obama will also have the opportunity to meet a noble, friendly, dignified people with an elevated sense of patriotism and national unity, who have always fought for a better future, despite the adversities we have had to confront.

The president of the United States will be welcomed by a revolutionary people with a deeply rooted political culture. That culture is the result of a long tradition of struggle for our genuine, definitive independence, first against Spanish colonialism and then against U.S. imperialist domination — a struggle in which our best sons and daughters have shed their blood and faced all manner of risks. He will be welcomed by a people who will never renounce the defense of their principles and the vast work of the revolution, by a people who will unwaveringly follow the examples

of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, José Martí, Antonio Maceo, Julio Antonio Mella, Rubén Martínez Villena, Antonio Guiteras, and Ernesto Che Guevara, among many others.

This is also a people united by historical, cultural, and emotional ties with the United States, whose emblematic figure, the writer Ernest Hemingway, received the Nobel Prize for literature for a novel set in Cuba. A people who show their gratitude to the sons and daughters of the United States who, like Thomas Jordan, Henry Reeve, Winchester Osgood, and Frederick Funston, fought with the Liberation Army in our wars of independence against Spain; and to those who in the more recent era have opposed aggression against Cuba, like Rev. Lucius Walker, who defied the blockade to bring their aid and solidarity to our people and who supported the return to the homeland of young Elián González and the Cuban Five. We learned from Martí to admire the homeland of Lincoln and repudiate Cutting.²

It is worth recalling the words of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, on Sept. 11, 2001, when he said, "Today is a day of tragedy for the United States. You know very well that hatred toward the American people has never been fostered here.



Above, Kathleen T. Rhem; inset, Militant/Seth Galinsky "Territory occupied by U.S. naval base at Guantánamo against the will of our government and people must be returned to Cuba," says editorial, "respecting the wish that Cubans have unanimously expressed for more than 100 years." Above, entrance to U.S. base circa 2005. Right, Sept. 28, 2015, rally in defense of Cuba near Cuban Mission in New York City, day Cuban President Raúl Castro was speaking at the U.N.



In Cuba, "Obama will find himself in a country that shares with other people not what we have left over but the modest resources we possess," the editorial notes. "We have made solidarity an essential element of our reason for being." Above, first contingent of 165 Cuban volunteer doctors and nurses arrive in Sierra Leone, Oct. 2, 2014, to help lead fight against Ebola in West Africa.

Cuba, precisely because of its culture, its lack of complexes, because it feels completely free, with a homeland and no master, is perhaps the country where U.S. citizens are treated with the greatest respect. We have never preached any kind of national hatred, nor anything approaching fanaticism. That is why we are so strong. We base our conduct on principles, on ideas, and treat every U.S. citizen who visits us with great respect — and they see this."

'A people proud of their history'

This is the people who will welcome President Obama — a people proud of their history, their roots, their national culture, confident that a better future is possible. A nation that is facing, with calm and determination, the current stage of relations with the United States, that recognizes the opportunities as well as the unresolved problems between the two countries.

The visit by the president of the United States will be an important step in the process toward normalization of bilateral relations. It should be remembered that Obama, as James Carter did previously, has set out to work toward normalization of ties with Cuba by making use of his executive powers and has in fact taken concrete action in this direction.

Nevertheless, a long, complex road lies ahead. Normalization will require resolving key issues that have accumulated over more than five decades and deepened the confrontational

character of relations between the two countries. Such problems are not resolved overnight, nor with a presidential visit.

'Lift the economic blockade'

To normalize relations with the United States, it is imperative to lift the economic, commercial, and financial blockade, which inflicts hardship on the Cuban people and is the principal obstacle to our country's development.

"Co-existing does not mean having to renounce the ideas that have brought us this far — our socialism, our history, our culture . . ."

It is worth noting President Obama's reiterated position that the blockade must be eliminated and his call on Congress to lift it. This is a demand supported by a growing majority of U.S. public opinion and almost unanimously by the international community, which at the United Nations General Assembly has approved 24 times in a row the Cuban resolution entitled "The necessity of ending the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

The U.S. president has taken steps to modify the implementation of some aspects of the blockade, and this



Granma photos by Ricardo López Cuban internationalist mission in Angola was "unparalleled in African history," said Nelson Mandela. Between 1975 and 1991 some 425,000 Cubans volunteered to defend Angola against invasions by South Africa's apartheid regime. Above, Cuban fighters in Cuito Cuanavale in May 1988, where major defeat was dealt to South African forces. Inset, Cuban literacy teacher Juana Martínez Rodríguez with Angolan students, 1988.

is positive. High-ranking officials in his administration have said others are being studied. Nevertheless, it has not been possible to implement a good number of these measures given their limited reach, the continuing existence of other regulations, and the intimidating effect of the blockade as a whole, which has been strictly enforced for more than 50 years.

It is contradictory that the U.S. government, on the one hand, adopts these measures and, on the other, intensifies sanctions against Cuba that affect the daily lives of our people. The reality is that the blockade remains in place and is rigorously enforced, including extraterritorially, which has a chilling effect on companies and banks from the United States and other countries. Examples of this are the multimillion-dollar fines that continue to be levied on U.S. companies and banking institutions as well as those of other countries because of their relations with Cuba; the denial of services and blocking of financial operations by international banks with our country; and the freezing of legitimate transfers of funds to and from Cuba, including those in currencies other than

the U.S. dollar.

The Cuban people hope that the U.S. president's visit will strengthen his resolve to take an active part in a thorough debate in Congress over lifting the blockade, and that he will also continue to use his executive prerogatives to modify as much as possible its implementation without the need for legislative action.

End 'regime change' policy

Other issues that impinge on Cuban sovereignty must also be resolved in order to achieve normal relations between the two countries. The territory occupied by the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo against the will of our government and people must be returned to Cuba, respecting the wish that Cubans have unanimously expressed for more than 100 years. There must be a halt to programs that interfere in our affairs and aim to cause destabilization and changes in our country's political, economic, and social order. The policy of "regime change" must be ended once and for all.

Likewise, efforts to manufacture a domestic political opposition, funded by U.S. taxpayers, must be ended. Radio and TV broadcasts targeting Cuba, in open violation of international law, and the illegitimate use of telecommunications for political purposes must also be ended. The goal should be not to influence Cuban society but to put technology at the service of development and knowledge.

The preferential immigration treatment our citizens receive under the

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For further reading ...

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by Jack Barnes

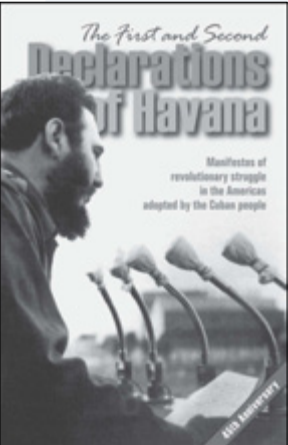
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Fla. farmworkers demand pay increase from Wendy's

BY THERESA KENDRICK

PALM BEACH, Fla. — Despite attempts by city officials to restrict their right to protest, 300 farmworkers and their supporters demonstrated here March 12 demanding Wendy's restaurant Chairman Nelson Peltz, who owns a mansion nearby, agree to raise the workers' pay. Cynthia Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Florida, and campaign volunteers joined the protest.

The action was organized by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which is conducting a boycott of Wendy's until it agrees to pay farmworkers a penny more per pound of tomatoes they pick. Other fast-food outlets have agreed to the workers' demand.

Lawyers for the city of Palm Beach, one of the wealthiest cities in the country,

claimed a street march would endanger the local population and demanded protesters be barred from using loudspeakers, saying the decibel level of marchers should be no louder than a conversation between two individuals. They demanded sponsors pay a \$10 million bond to cover any damage to the town.

In response to a challenge by the farmworkers support group, federal judge Robin Rosenberg lifted the sound restrictions, but demonstrators were forced to march on the sidewalk.

"The Socialist Workers Party campaign opposes the efforts of Palm Beach officials to restrict marchers," Jaquith said in a statement distributed to marchers. "The SWP campaign stands with the fights of farmworkers and all workers demanding \$15 and a union."



Farmworkers and others march in Palm Beach, Florida, March 12 for raise for tomato pickers.

Rail unionists to vote on new NJ Transit contract



Militant/Jacob Perasso

NEW YORK — Eleven rail unions representing 4,200 workers announced a tentative contract settlement with New Jersey Transit March 11, two days before the strike deadline unionists had authorized.

A thousand unionists had rallied in Woodbridge, New Jersey, March 5, above, against company concession demands.

Some union members the *Militant* contacted March 15 had yet to see a copy of the proposed contract and were reluctant to comment on it.

The big business press is reporting the new contract includes a 21 percent pay raise over eight and a half years — retroactive to 2011, when the last contract expired — while increasing workers out-of-pocket payment for medical coverage from \$82 a month to \$130 to \$160 a month, depending upon which plan a worker has and their seniority.

Rail bosses on this state-run system had been pushing to increase workers' monthly medical costs to as much as \$460 to \$642.

"I'm glad we finally reached a settlement, but the medical went up considerably and the raise isn't as high as people wanted," maintenance worker Joel Shumate, 24, who's worked at New Jersey Transit for four years, told the *Militant* at New York's Penn Station.

— NORTON SANDLER

'Cuban people will defend our sovereignty, our revolution'

Continued from page 9

Cuban Adjustment Act and the "wet foot, dry foot" policy leads to the loss of lives and encourages illegal emigration and human trafficking, in addition to generating problems for third countries. This situation must be changed.

The Cuban medical professional "parole" program must be ended. This is a program that deprives the country of human resources vital to the health of our people and affects the intended beneficiaries of Cuban cooperation with nations that need our support. It is also necessary to change the policy requiring Cuban athletes to break ties with their country in order to play in U.S. leagues.

These policies of the past are incongruous with the new stage the U.S. government has initiated with our country. They were all established prior to President Obama's administration, but he could modify some of them through executive decisions and eliminate others entirely.

Cuba has engaged in building a new relationship with the United States while fully exercising its sovereignty and remaining committed to its ideals of social justice and solidarity. No one can presume that this means we must renounce a single one of our principles, concede an inch in the defense of these principles, or abandon what is stated in our Constitution: "Economic and diplomatic relations with any other state can never be negotiated under aggression, threats, or coercion by a foreign power."

Nor can there be even the slightest doubt as to Cuba's unconditional commitment to its revolutionary and anti-imperialist ideals, and to its foreign policy in support of the world's just causes, our defense of the self-determination of peoples, and our tradition of support to our sister countries.

Revoke U.S. sanctions on Venezuela

As was expressed in the most recent statement of the revolutionary government, our solidarity with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the government led by President Nicolás Maduro, and the Bolivarian, Chavista people remains and will remain immutable. They are fighting to follow their own path, and are facing systematic attempts at destabilization and unilateral sanctions under an unjustified, unjust U.S. executive order issued in March 2015, which was condemned throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The March 3 U.S. announcement extending the so-called "national emergency" and sanctions is a direct and unacceptable act of interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela and its sovereignty. The order must be revoked. This will be a firm, ongoing demand by Cuba.

As Army General Raúl Castro said, "We will not renounce our ideals of independence and social justice, surrender even a single one of our principles, or concede a millimeter in the defense of our national sovereignty. We will not allow ourselves to be pressured in regard to our internal affairs. We have won this sovereign right with

great sacrifices and the highest risks."

We reiterate once again: we have reached this point as a result of our convictions and because we have reason and justice on our side.

Cuba reaffirms its desire to advance in relations with the United States on the basis of respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the principles of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Region of Peace, signed by the region's heads of state and government. These principles include absolute respect for independence and sovereignty; the inalienable right of every state to choose its own political, economic, social, and cultural system without interference of any kind; and equality and reciprocity.

Cuba reiterates its full willingness to maintain a respectful dialogue with the U.S. government and develop relations of civilized co-existence. Co-existence, however, does not mean having to renounce the ideas in which we believe and that have brought us this far — our socialism, our history, our culture.

Cuba and the United States have profound conceptual differences with respect to political models, social justice, international relations, world peace and stability, among other issues — and these differences will continue.

Cuba defends the indivisible, interdependent, and universal character of the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of human rights. We are convinced that it is an obli-

gation of governments to defend and guarantee the right to health, education, social security, equal pay for equal work, the rights of children, as well as the right to food and development. We reject political manipulation and double standards relating to human rights, which must end. Cuba, which has signed 44 international agreements on this subject — the United States has only committed to 18 — has much to share, defend, and show in this regard.

Our ties with the United States must be based on the two countries respecting their differences and creating a relationship that is beneficial to both peoples.

Regardless of the progress that may be achieved in our ties with the United States, the Cuban people will continue to move forward. Through our own efforts and proven capacity and creativity, we will continue to work for the country's development and for the well-being of Cubans. We will not stop demanding an end to the blockade, which has caused and causes so much harm. We will continue the process of updating the social and economic model we have chosen, and the construction of a prosperous, sustainable socialism to consolidate the gains of the revolution.

This is the path that was sovereignly chosen and that will surely be reaffirmed by the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, with Fidel and Raúl at the head of our victory.

This is the Cuba that will offer a respectful welcome to President Obama.

Breakup of rally sets back working class

Continued from front page

— a vital conquest of working people and protection of our right to speak, organize strike pickets, and mobilize protest rallies and marches.

I was at the Chicago rally talking with workers and finding interest in what the Socialist Workers Party has to say. Most of those who came to hear Trump are working people, hard hit by the world economic depression and fed up with a system that ignores persistent unemployment, employer attacks on wages and job conditions and other indignities. They're interested in Trump because he thumbs his nose at party bosses and says he has a "winning" plan to create jobs.

Efforts to shut down those you disagree with set back workers' struggles. The working class must defend free speech for all. We need it to discuss and debate how to defend ourselves from employer and government attacks. We need an independent working-class political alternative to the rulers' parties. Shutting down political expression is inevitably turned against workers, our unions and other organizations by the capitalist government, courts, cops and hired goons.

Liberal and middle-class radical groups that call for thuggish actions to shout down Trump play into the hands of his campaign and his Republican and Democratic rivals. They put wind in the sails of Trump's own thuggish rhetoric targeting immigrants, Mus-

lims, women and protesters.

The arguments by such political groups go hand in hand with bourgeois commentators of all stripes who say that those who attend Trump's rallies are bigoted Caucasian workers. This is a slander, something we confirm as the SWP campaigns, whether in workers' neighborhoods or elsewhere, including Trump rallies.

Trump isn't a fascist. There is no growing ultra-rightist or fascist movement today. The bosses don't need one, because the working class is not yet strong or organized enough to challenge their rule.

Some protesters in Chicago carried signs against deportations, defending rights for Muslims, opposing cop killings and championing Black rights. The working class has a big stake in these struggles. But strengthening them is inseparable from defending space to speak and demonstrate.

The Socialist Workers Party urges working people to break with the capitalist parties, to build our own party, a labor party based on our unions.

Join us in campaigning for the socialist, working-class alternative. Join us in the fight for \$15 and a union and other labor actions, protests against cop violence, rallies backing a woman's right to choose abortion, against deportations and attacks on mosques, and in support of ranchers and farmers defending their livelihood.

Without championing the right to speak out and organize, none of this will be possible.

Syria truce aims to serve US, Moscow rulers

Continued from front page

most important political results of the operation," Russian news writer Vladimir Frolov told the *New York Times*.

U.S. imperialism was weakened by the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, leaving it without Moscow's capacity to use Stalinist parties throughout the world to stifle revolutionary struggles and nationalist uprisings. Washington's efforts since then to use raw military might to press its interests — in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere — have failed. So President Barack Obama led moves to pull back from use of ground troops in the Middle East and seek accommodation with Tehran, through the recently concluded nuclear pact, and with Moscow, in efforts to forge a new axis of power.

Moscow intervened directly in Syria more than five months ago, deploying some 50 warplanes, 4,000 support troops and a modern anti-aircraft missile system. The Russian government says it has conducted more than 9,000 bombing missions. Most have been high-flying runs with low-precision bombs, meaning significant destruction and death in civilian areas.

Moscow claimed it was targeting Islamic State, but most of its attacks were aimed at opposition forces that had been backed by Washington. These groups have been significantly weakened. Flying cover for Assad's troops and aided by Iranian and Tehran-backed Lebanese Hezbollah ground troops, Moscow helped the regime recover and retake territory in Latakia province as well as around Damascus, Aleppo and in the south. In his announcement on the Russian withdrawal, Putin said the "principal tasks set for the armed forces of Russia in Syria have been accomplished."

While Washington sometimes cries crocodile tears over the blows delivered to opposition Free Syrian Army forces, the U.S. rulers have welcomed Moscow's moves to stabilize the region.

This "is not a bad outcome for the White House, which has been lukewarm about the prospect of Syrian regime change," the *Washington Post* said March 16. The White House announced that day that Secretary of State John Kerry would go to Moscow to confer with Putin about what to do next.

'Obama Doctrine'

An article titled "The Obama Doctrine" by Jeffrey Goldberg in the April issue of the *Atlantic* throws light on the weakened state of U.S. imperialism. It is based on numerous interviews with the president.

Goldberg describes Obama's approach to foreign policy as "realist-driven restraint." Obama refers to

London and Paris as "free riders," reflecting the fact that Washington remains the central imperialist military power, allocating \$581 billion a year to warfare, 36 percent of total world military expenditures.

Discussing his pivot to Tehran, Obama says the Saudis need to "share the neighborhood" with Iran to bring about "some sort of cold peace." His contempt for the masses of working people in the Mideast comes through in the article, when Goldberg writes, "In recent days, the president has taken to joking privately, 'All I need in the Middle East is a few smart autocrats.'"

Goldberg points out that while Washington resists putting American boots on the ground, it relies increasingly on airstrikes by warplanes and drones. Goldberg calls him "the most successful terrorist-hunter in the history of the presidency, one who will hand to his successor a set of tools an accomplished assassin would envy."

'Armageddon' if Kurds get autonomy

The battle of the Kurdish people — some 30 million strong spread across Syria, Turkey, Iran and Iraq — for control of their homeland remains a burning question in the region. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif told the press March 15 that any redrawing of borders in the region — like Kurdish autonomy — could lead to "Armageddon."

Tehran, like all the capitalist regimes in the area, fear "infection" from moves toward Kurdish independence in Iraq and Syria.

A suicide car bomb attack killed more than 36 people in Ankara March 13. No group has claimed responsibility, but Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan blamed the Kurdistan People's Party (PKK) and ordered bombing of PKK camps in northern Iraq the next day. He also launched a new assault on the majority Kurdish southeastern region of Turkey. More than 230 Kurds were arrested, dozens killed and new curfews imposed on Kurdish towns there. This area has been under attack by government forces since last summer. The Kurdish-based People's Democratic Party (HDP) denounced the Ankara bombing as a "savage attack."

In preparation for further attacks on political rights in Turkey, Erdogan has called for broadening the legal definition of "terrorist" to include those who speak in support of Kurdish independence. "It may be the terrorist who detonates bombs and pulls the trigger, but it is these supporters who enable them to achieve their goals," he said March 14.

Socialist candidate

Continued from page 3

about getting the 'best deal' to ensure profits keep flowing to the U.S. capitalists."

Fernando Garcia agreed. "Under Obama the border crossings are more dangerous, resulting in many deaths" of immigrants, he said. "The government has increased its border patrols."

After the rally was cancelled, Kennedy saw the Garcias walking to their car. "I don't agree with Trump," she told them, "but I don't agree with what happened tonight. Freedom of speech protects the right of workers to speak out and organize."

"This will just mean more votes for Trump," Eric Garcia said.

The next day Kennedy campaigned door to door in the Chicago suburb of Elmhurst. While much of the discussion was about Trump's rally being broken up, topics ranged from police brutality to Syria to the effects on working people of the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Kennedy told Derek Dedman, a 20-year-old broker for a logistics company, about the fight against the cold-blooded police killing of cattle rancher Jack Yantis in Idaho, and showed him an article about it in the *Militant*. "You hear about the police killing Blacks, but you never hear about things like this," Dedman said.

Police killings are a class question, Kennedy said. "The police protect the interests of the wealthy by keeping workers in their place. But because of the protests more cops are being charged. This shows we can have an impact."

Bojka Milanovich told Kennedy about the devastation her country, the former Yugoslavia, faces today. Rival fragments of the disintegrating Stalinist regime went to war in the 1990s, using nationalist demagoguery to grab territory and resources. Washington and its imperialist competitors in Europe intervened militarily to advance their interests, adding to the carnage.

"The Socialist Workers Party campaigned against the U.S. bombing assault on your country," Kennedy said, "and we oppose their intervention in Syria today. They don't care what happens to us or the Syrian workers, they're only protecting their imperial power in the Middle East."

"We should get out of Syria," Milanovich replied.

"I work in a hospital and see the abuse of workers, especially immigrants," she said. She made a \$10 donation to the campaign and got a copy of *New Internationalist* magazine with the article "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun," which describes the roots of the growing capitalist conflicts and depression conditions that mark the world today.

LETTERS

For more wildlife refuges

There is no question [Dwight and Steven] Hammond — and probably other ranchers in the area — are being treated unjustly by the federal government, and that Mr. Finicun has apparently been murdered by the Oregon State Police and the FBI. However, if the federal government has been buying up land in order to establish wildlife refuges, I am all for it. An armed occupation of a wildlife refuge terrifies and endangers the innocent, and provides opportunities for irreparable vandalism.

National and state parks, forests, and wildlife refuges are valuable in and of themselves.

Monica Adams

Ruckersville, Virginia

End solitary confinement!

The release of political prisoner Albert Woodfox was long overdue, and his support for efforts to bring an end to the practice of long confinement that lasts for decades in solitary is no surprise. There are others who are still being held in solitary confinement [including] Lee Lane in the state of Louisiana.

Nyati Bolt

San Francisco, California

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

Help make it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.